

# AMBASSADOR OUTREACH

AN INITIATIVE TO HELP GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COUNCILS  
BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH PRIORITY COUNTRIES

The Office of General Counsel and Public Affairs Department, with the endorsement of the International Coordinating Committee, ask government relations councils in international areas to implement in their area the Ambassador Outreach Initiative. This initiative is designed to expand the Church's diplomacy efforts in international government relations priority countries.

Pursuant to this initiative, all ambassadors from priority countries who are stationed in cities where area offices are located, or where Area Directors of Public Affairs (ADPAs) and Area Legal Counsel (ALCs) and their assistants are located, will receive a visit by local Church representatives. Government relations councils may decide whether visits should be made to priority-country ambassadors stationed elsewhere within their area.

The following six steps will assist the government relations councils with the implementation of the Ambassador Outreach Initiative:

## **1. Understand the duties of ambassadors and recognize their current and future importance to the Church**

Ambassadors are the highest ranking diplomats and government representatives stationed in a foreign capital. The host country typically allows the ambassador specific territory called an embassy, whose territory, staff, and vehicles are generally afforded diplomatic immunity in the host country.

They are personal representatives of their home country's president or head of state. While serving abroad, they symbolize the sovereignty of their home country. Their duties include negotiating agreements; reporting on political, economic and social conditions; advising on policy options; protecting their home country's interests; and coordinating all activities of their home country's agencies and personnel in the host country.

Ambassadors are key opinion leaders. Rising through the diplomatic ranks, they often have experience in dealing



Hans Holbein the Younger: *The Ambassadors*, 1533. The life-sized panel portrays Jean de Dinteville and Georges de Selve, the ambassadors of Francis I of France.

with a wide variety of issues, including emergency and special needs of visiting organizations and citizens from the ambassadors' home country. This experience makes them valuable to a worldwide Church with traveling representatives and Church entities that function across country borders. Ambassadors generally have the ear of their president or head of state. Through official reports and in other settings, they can influence opinions about the Church at the highest levels. They are well connected with government officials in their home country, host country and in other countries where they have served.

Because their assignments change, ambassadors take whatever opinions they have formed about the Church to their next host country and continue to influence others in discussions about the Church. As their careers progress, it is not uncommon for ambassadors to be appointed to some of the highest government offices with decision-making authority and influence on matters such as religious freedom. By that time, it is hoped that a strong relationship will have been established between the Church and these key opinion leaders in all host countries where they have served.

## **2. Remember we are building relationships globally—not just locally**

It is easy for an area relations council to focus exclusively on local government relations activities that meet local objectives. However, as a global Church and as a people who care for one another because we try to follow the example of Jesus Christ, we have a responsibility to build relationships that will help our brothers and sisters in *all* countries of the world. By investing time and effort in relationships with ambassadors who represent countries



other than our own, we invest in the strength of government relations worldwide. Providing a positive and even life-changing experience for a Russian ambassador in Brazil today, may make a life-changing difference in how members of the Church can live and worship in Russia tomorrow. We are a global government relations team.

### 3. Plan visits to ambassadors

Doing the right homework, even before requesting a visit with an ambassador, is essential. Government relations councils should –

- Discuss how to best meet the objectives of the visit: (1) to establish a relationship of mutual trust and respect, (2) to provide a “local face” for the Church, (3) to explain the Church’s presence, contributions and local leadership in the ambassador’s home country (using the country fact sheet explained in #4 below), and (4) to communicate the message that Latter-day Saints try to follow the example of Jesus Christ – the reason Church members in his/her home country do what they do. The objective is not to cover as many aspects of the Church as you can in the time allotted, nor to overwhelm him/her by dwelling on all the good being done by the Church in his/her home country.
- Assign someone to research and share the following with the council and whomever will be making the visit: (1) the ambassador’s bio, accomplishments, and other background information, and (2) what is currently going on in the ambassador’s “world” (for example, recent public statements and any recent news coverage).
- Based on this research, discuss points that Church representatives may briefly mention during the visit – perhaps at the beginning of the visit – that are relevant to the ambassador’s background, causes, or interest, and possibly relevant to the Church. Again, the council should understand most of the discussion during the visit should be based on the country fact sheet (explained in #4 below).
- Decide who will be the best Church representatives to visit the ambassador – normally at least one local priesthood leader with significant geographical stewardship in the country (peer to peer). Avoid sending an “entourage” but always assign at least two individuals unless protocol dictates otherwise. ADPAs and ALCs should not expect to be the ones to *make the visits* but rather the ones to *coordinate* the visits. Remember, one of the key principles of the Church’s

international government relations outreach is to emphasize the “local face” of the Church. This should be considered when deciding on the best Church representative(s) to visit the ambassador.

- Create talking points for Church representatives to review, if necessary, but only for rehearsal purposes.
- Anticipate questions and sensitive issues the ambassador may raise (ADPAs can provide training in how to respond to sensitive issues).
- Plan responses to possible requests for (1) humanitarian aid or monetary contributions to the ambassador’s home country, (2) official Church support or endorsement of any humanitarian or political cause, and (3) Church participation in any coalition or the signing of a petition or any other document that commits the Church.
- Decide whether the visit will be requested directly through the embassy or via a third party, perhaps a Church member, with whom the ambassador has a strong relationship. Phone-call requests made to the ambassador’s gatekeepers and assistants usually require skill in communicating to them the relevancy of the visit. The Public Affairs team in Washington, D.C. has found a formal letter of request to be the most effective means of initiating a visit (see example below).

12 May 2010

His Excellency (First and Last Name)  
Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan  
3504 International Drive, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

I am writing to request a short courtesy visit for Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, one of the most distinguished leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As you may remember, you became acquainted with Elder Holland during your trip to Utah last September.

Elder Holland will be traveling from the Church’s headquarters based in Salt Lake City, Utah and will be visiting Washington, D.C. on Friday, 4 June 2010. He would like to meet with you to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Elder Holland is a member of the Church’s Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He is also a past President of Brigham Young University. Please find his biography attached.

My associate, Ms. Mauri Earl, will contact your assistant, \_\_\_\_\_, to learn of your availability. In the meantime, I may be reached at (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,

Ann Santini  
International Affairs



- Remember the time allotted for the visit is at the ambassador's discretion. When initiating the visit, it is most respectful to request a "short courtesy visit" of 15-30 minutes.
- Initiate and schedule the visit.

#### 4. Prepare materials

Government relations councils should be careful to not deluge ambassadors with DVDs, books and other materials. Approved materials include a leave-behind folder consisting of the following:

- Folder (produced locally; folders with Church logo in English or Spanish may be ordered through Public Affairs Department)
- Tabernacle Choir CD (available through Public Affairs Department)
- Country fact sheet – in language of ambassador's home country. Intended to give an overview of Church's presence and activities in ambassador's home country, along with historical and contact information. PDF files available on "GR Plans & Councils" LDS Teams site for local printing. Available in English and in the language of ambassador's home country, if not English. Available in 8½x11 and A4 formats. Some languages and A4 sizes still in production as of 2/14/11. Country fact sheets will be updated annually, following announced reorganizations of Area Presidencies and with input from government relations councils. See "Country Fact Sheets for Priority Countries."
- "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" in language of ambassador's home country (to be shipped to government relations councils)
- "The Living Christ" in language of ambassador's home country (to be shipped to government relations councils)
- Brochure "Learn More About The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" in language of ambassador's home country (to be shipped to government relations councils)

ADPAs are responsible for acquiring and assembling these leave-behind folders.





## 5. Learn protocols and techniques to effectively manage the visit

## Protocols

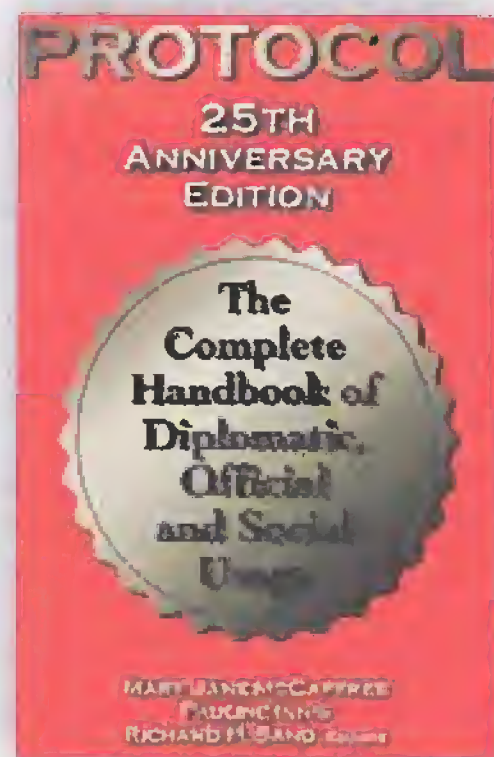
In contrast to etiquette, protocol exists to guide interactions with official communities such as embassies and consulates. The rules of protocol are rules of the road to help you avoid social accidents and bruised feelings.

By virtue of the position, an ambassador and spouse rely on the support of and are afforded special courtesies.

Once an ambassador outreach visit has been initiated and scheduled, ADPA's and ALCs should review protocols with the Church representatives designated by the government relations council to make the visit.

Some protocols are written and some are not. Two resources include –

- The protocol officer at the embassy. Most protocol officers are happy to assist with specific questions.
- Online resources and reference books, including one used by the Public Affairs staff in Washington, D.C.: *Protocol*, by Mary Jane McCaffree, et al. Visit <http://www.amazon.com/Handbook-Diplomatic-Officer-Mary-Jane-McCaffree/dp/0765605550>



Common international protocols include the following:

- Formality in addressing the ambassador. The ambassador should be addressed in conversation as “Mr. Ambassador” or “Ambassador (surname).” The ambassador’s spouse is addressed as “Mrs. (surname).” She should not be addressed by her first name, unless one has been asked to do so. Americans do not use the title “Excellency” when speaking to or about an ambassador. Nor do they use “Mrs. Ambassador” or “Madame Ambassador” when speaking to or about the ambassador’s spouse.
- When the ambassador or spouse enters a room, all present, both men and women, should rise.

- The ambassador and spouse precede all others when entering or leaving a room.
- An invitation from the ambassador generally takes precedence over other commitments. But if it would be embarrassing to cancel a conflicting previous engagement, the ambassador should be consulted and permission to decline the invitation requested.
- When making introductions to an ambassador, the ambassador's name and title is stated first, then the person being introduced.
- When attending social functions that the ambassador and other high-ranking diplomatic officers are also attending, arrive approximately 15 minutes early and make a special point to greet these officers. A personal greeting, however, is not necessary at a very large reception.

Additional protocols exist for riding in a car with an ambassador, greetings and seating arrangements at social functions and dinners, and other courtesies.

## The Visit

Immediately before making the visit, Church representatives should –

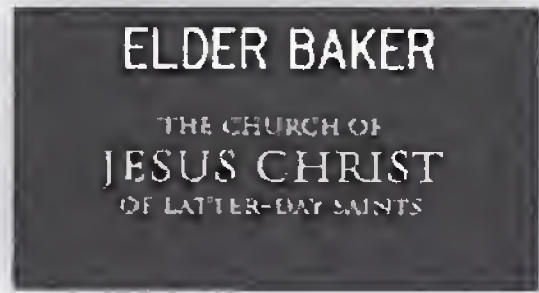
- Review talking points
- Offer a prayer for guidance, inspiration and the presence of the Spirit

**During the visit, Church representatives should –**

- Rely on the Spirit.
- Be warm, friendly, genuine, and of good cheer. But always be professional and respectful, avoiding the temptation of many caring Latter-day Saints to pursue conversations about personal matters.
- Allow the ambassador to initiate any “small talk.”
- Communicate briefly and to the point.
- Be conscious of the time allotted for the visit.
- Acknowledge the ambassador’s work.
- Only raise subjects with which they are familiar, avoiding controversial subjects.
- Respect the ambassador’s opinions.
- Cover the talking points they have reviewed, remembering the objectives of the visit.
- Before giving the leave-behind folder to the ambassador, briefly explain its contents
- Express gratitude for the ambassador’s time and attention.



- Return and report to the government relations council. The ADPA and ALC ensure all necessary information is entered in the Opinion Leader Database.



*An ice-breaking technique: Before covering the talking points, one of the Church representatives may choose to put the ambassador at ease by pulling a missionary name tag out of his pocket and saying: "You may have seen our young adult men or women walking or riding*

*their bikes down the street, wearing a name tag like this. They are our volunteer missionaries." Then as the Church representative quickly puts the name tag back in his pocket, he says: "But we're not here to talk about that." Then he proceeds to cover the talking points.*

## 6. Nurture and maintain relationships

Like all relationships, relationships with ambassadors must be nurtured and maintained. Government relations councils should consider and implement the same types of follow-up activities they are used to seeing in their government relations contact plans. Councils should not overwhelm and smother ambassadors with follow-up contacts but they are asked to do the following:

- Send a follow-up letter of appreciation soon after the visit.
- Well in advance of the National Day of the ambassador's home country, send a congratulatory card or note. Simple wording may include: "We extend our best wishes on the day of your country's independence."

*Note: The National Day is a designated date on which celebrations mark the nationhood of a nation or non-sovereign country. This nationhood can be symbolized by the date of independence, of becoming republic or a significant date for a patron saint or a ruler (birthday, accession, removal etc.). Often the day is not called "National Day" but serves and can be considered as one. The National Day will often be a national holiday. Some countries have more than one National Day. A list of National Days is found on Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Day](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Day).*

- Recognize other special events and accomplishments of the ambassador.
- Look for other appropriate and relevant opportunities for interaction and further understanding of the Church and its members (temple lighting ceremonies, regional conferences, Tabernacle Choir performances).
- Send updated country fact sheets as they are produced.
- Arrange for a *Liahona* subscription.
- Send Christmas cards or comparable cards if a customary practice (e.g., Chinese New Year cards) to ambassadors from predominantly non-Christian countries.
- Assign someone to monitor ambassador changes of assignment. Take opportunity, if possible, to wish the outgoing ambassador well. Initiate and schedule a visit with the incoming ambassador.
- Forward to the appropriate ADPA and ALC information and contact history about the ambassador leaving your country and being transferred to theirs. Enter transfer information in Opinion Leader Database.

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*Note: The Ambassador Outreach program is not to be confused with Brigham Young University's Ambassadorial Lecture Series, nor the Public Affairs Department's ambassador-hosting activities organized by its VIP Hosting Directors at Church headquarters and Public Affairs staff in Washington, D.C.*